

**Setting up of Expert Panel**

1626. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will (he Minister of SHIPPING be pleased to state:

(a) whether his Ministry has requested the Finance Ministry to set up an expert panel to suggest a level playing field for the industry to compete globally; and

(b) if so, the response received thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) to (b) No, Sir. However, the representations received from the Shipping Industry and its Association, the Indian National Shipowners' Association, for grant of incentives to the Shipping Industry in order to have a level playing field to compete globally, are examined from time to time in consultation with Ministry of Finance.

**Disabled allowance to handicapped**

1627. SHRI ANIL SHARMA: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration for payment of disabled allowance to the handicapped persons at least in the rural and hilly areas of Himachal Pradesh under the Social Security Act; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) and (b) Under Social Security Pension Scheme, Disability Relief Allowance @Rs. 150/-p.m. is being provided to 12557 disabled persons in the State of Himachal Pradesh.

**Juvenile Homes**

1628. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Juvenile Justice Act is not good for children and juvenile homes are over-crowded;

(b) whether it is also a fact that recently the upper age limit of children in homes has been increased from 16 to 18 in a convention held in Delhi; and

(c) if so, the steps being taken by Government to redraft the Act as also to increase the number and capacity of juvenile homes?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) The Government is not aware of any Convention held in Delhi recommending increase of age in the Juvenile Justice Act. However, the Government has already replaced the Juvenile Justice Act, 1986 by a new Act namely, The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000. This Act has been enforced in the country except the State of Jammu & Kashmir with effect from 1st April, 2001. As per the new Act uniform age of 18 years has been prescribed for both boys and girls under the Juvenile Justice Act, which was earlier 16 years for boys and 18 years for girls. The Central Government is implementing a scheme called "A programme for Juvenile Justice", under which the State Governments and Union Territory Administrations are assisted on a 50:50 basis for establishing and running of Homes under the Juvenile Justice Act. The Homes are being administered by the State Governments and UT Administrations. They are required to send proposals for availing the grants under this scheme. Whenever, proposals are received from State Governments/ UT Administrations for establishment of new Homes or expansion of existing ones, the grants are released by the Central Government to them for the purpose as per norms.

**Implementation of Schemes for benefit of SCs and Nav-Buddhas**

1629. SHRI R.S. GAVAI: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that only 10 per cent of the outlay has been consumed by the state Governments out of plan allocation made for the schemes for the benefit of SCs and Nav-Buddhas;

(b) if so, the details of the plan allocation made by Government on different schemes and actual money spent by the State Governments during the last financial year;

(c) the reasons for the delay in implementation of schemes and utilisation of funds; and

(d) the steps proposed for proper utilisation of funds?